

CABINET – 11 OCTOBER 2018

PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM 4)

[Written Response to Questioner not present at the meeting]

2.

Questioner: Hadia Yaqubi, Harrow Youth Parliament (HYP)

Asked of: Councillor Graham Henson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships, Devolution and Customer Services

Question: “What is Harrow Council planning to do to tackle child poverty considering there are little details on this within the Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation (VVE) Strategy for 2018?”

Response: Thank you for your question Hadia.

When I look at the life chances of our younger generation living in Harrow under the past 8 years of austerity, I am frightened and you are quite right to ask what we as a council can do to tackle child poverty – especially when you consider that after housing costs, the proportion of children living in poverty in Harrow is nearly 32%, which means that within a class of 30 children - 10 are living in poverty and this number is rising. This was also reflected in the recent Young Harrow Foundation needs analysis, where nearly 4,500 of our younger Harrow residents responded to the consultation –

As an Administration, we have made child poverty a key priority, which is far wider than just the VVE strategy

The Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy (2017-2020) which was finalised last year, sets out 5 priority areas

Priority 1: To increase opportunities for parents with English as a second language to enter employment, education and training and support adults in gaining skills

Priority 2: To tackle financial exclusion, including debt management, financial literacy, affordable credit and maximise benefit take up

Priority 3: To increase opportunities for inward investment and funding opportunities by working with the voluntary and community sector

Priority 4: To improve health and wellbeing of all children and families. Support families access early support services. Focus improving health outcomes for looked after children, children at

the edge of care, children with SEND.

Priority 5: To support families with housing issues and are in temporary accommodation.

Although not explicitly linked to our VVE Strategy, it is clear that poverty is one of the things that can make young people more vulnerable to being exploited by criminal gangs, such as getting involved in dealing drugs. Our approach in the VVE strategy is about early intervention where there is evidence that this will make people safer. However, if we need to make more of an explicit link between the strategies as this will make a real difference to young people's lives, then I'm happy to work with my fellow Portfolio Holders to look at this and we will also be engaging with the HYP and other young people on the links between child poverty and VVE.
